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MI 728 Mission and Gender

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Syllabus

Course Description:

Study of the ways women and men participate in Christian mission within the contexts of their history, society and culture; their Scriptural and theological tradition; and their personal life situation. Special consideration will be given to women's issues related to mission; for instance, construction of gender identity to fit their circumstances to enable their work. The course will be run as a seminar.

Purposes:

1. To introduce students to women's contributions in Christian mission.
2. To provide students with critical tools for discerning issues related to gender and mission.
3. To put students in touch with women, past and present, who serve as role models for doing Christian mission.
4. To provide students with opportunities for personal contact with men and women mission leaders and workers from North American and non-Western settings.
5. To encourage students to affirm and support women in mission.

Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students will be prepared:

1. To tell many stories of what, why and how women have done mission.
2. To articulate a theology of mission that is inclusive of women.
3. To participate in informed discussion of positions regarding the ordination of women and know how these play out in mission settings and organizations.
4. To understand styles of male and female partnership in mission.
5. To identify practical issues and gender-related pressures faced by women missionaries.
6. To speculate whether women, in the course of their ministries, have generated any new theories of mission.
7. To consider if women's spirituality exists as a unique factor in mission.

Requirements:

1. Course readings and preparation for participation in weekly class sessions. 15%
2. Interview of a person who spent significant time in cross-cultural mission and knows gender issues faced by men and women within a local situation.
Two-page interview summary. Due September 19. 15%
3. Participant observation of a ministry led by a woman, ideally someone working in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting.
One-page detailed description of ministry event. Due October 3. 10%
4. Reading of 250-500 pages beyond the assigned texts on a special topic* related to the course. (See list on next page)
Signed Reading Log, stating dates and sources read. Due November 7. 20%
5. Leading 1-hour seminar presentation on a *special topic* related to the course.
Handout notes for seminar given on date of presentation. 5%
[Note available SEMINAR dates on course schedule, set seminar date with professor.]
6. **Research paper (15-20 pp.) supporting presentation. Due December 5.** 35%

Special topics suggested for seminar presentations may include (but are not limited) to:

Biographies

Women's concerns and mission responses within

Religio-cultural contexts:

Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist,

Chinese, Korean, Latino, or Traditional societies, etc.

Social contexts:

Role of women

Girl children

Marriage practices

Cultural dynamics of cross-cultural marriages

Prostitution

Employment practices

Slavery

Women segregated in society

Women's contributions to theology of mission/ministry

Ordination of women and implications for ministry

Gender roles within specific mission organizations

Gender reconciliation

Feminist theories (Christian and secular)

Gender dynamics (power, decision-making, status and role issues)

Styles of male/female partnership in mission

Wifetypes in ministry, ministerial partnering patterns

Sexual harassment and abuse and clergy persons

Sisterhood as it is understood in different church traditions

Works started by women missionaries or mission groups

Bible women as role models for gender (in China, Korea, 1920's to present)

Professionalization/ specialization of clergy roles and associations in mission

Spirituality and spiritual expressions of women and men

Vocations of mission – church-based, NGO-based, independent

Women's missionary movement leaders

Mujerista and other non-Western feminist projects

Pool of probable guests and resource persons this semester:

Frances Adeney

Don Bray

Kathryn Hendershot

Anita Keith

Kay Rader

Marcia Florkey

Presbyterian, Indonesia, USA

Wesleyan World Mission (Global Partners), USA

United Methodist Church (D.Miss. ATS 2005), USA

Episcopal (My People, International) (Canada)

The Salvation Army, Korea, England, USA

United Methodist Church (GBGM), USA

Questions for consideration in the class:

1. What opportunities have women found to be involved in Christian mission?
2. Cite examples of women in mission who are role models for us.
3. How have women understood mission and been able to articulate their actions in terms of mission? (This would be from their framework of the Scriptures, their culture, their tradition, and their unique gifts and callings.)
4. What obstacles have women had to face, and overcome, in order to be involved in Christian mission? [Identify theological, cultural, historical, societal or institutional positions that needed to be challenged. Historical circumstances may complicate removal of the obstacles.]
5. Are there any explanations of why women's roles in mission have not been viewed as prominent and important as men's roles? How do issues of clericalism, patriarchy, chauvenism and/or gender hierarchy play into the practice of Christian mission?
6. What responses have women made as they have attempted to find their place as missionaries? [Individual or movement actions related to biblical feminism, social role or stratification, valuing of the laity and/or the inclusion of women in ordination, for example.]
7. Where have women made great changes or contributions to the way Christian mission is done?
8. [Speculative: What elements are essential (if any) when women construct their identity in mission? And, are these also the elements able to sustain them within their mission work as they experience pressures from men, institutions, cultures, and/or community's values and expectations for them? Is gender identity construction even necessary today...and if it is, in what circumstances?]

Class Schedule:

- 9/12 ***Stereotypes, stories and basic issues in our backgrounds!***
Getting acquainted with course and with one another.
VIDEO: "The Inn of the Sixth Happiness"
READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. ix-xxii
Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. xi-28
- 9/19 ***Understanding mission and the idea of gender identity***
READ: Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference*
Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 29-71
Due: Interview of person serving in cross-cultural mission
- 9/26 ***Early issues faced by American missionary women***
READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 1-124
Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 73-98
GUEST: [TBA]
SEMINAR:
- 10/3 ***Women as mission leaders, female missionary organizations***
READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 125-316
GUEST: [TBA]
SEMINAR:
Due: Description of Participant-Observation of Ministry Event
- 10/10 ***Roman Catholic sisters and lay women leading missions***
READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 317-407
SEMINAR:
Field Trip to Retreat Center (overnight 10/9-10 or 10/10-11)
- 10/17 ***Theology and theories of men and women in mission***
READ: Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission*, pp. 409-418
(Also, Stanley Grenz and Denise M. Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*)
Kingdom Conference Week
SEMINAR:
- 10/24 ***Amy Carmichael as a case study for women's mission***
READ: Frank L. Houghton, *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur*
VIDEO: Dohnavur Fellowship Today
SEMINAR:

- 10/31 ***Political, social, theological gender problems faced by women in the 20th century***
 READ: Dana Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, pp. 99-221
 Janet Stocks, "Voices from the Margins: Evangelical Feminist Negotiation in the Public Debate of a Small Denomination in the United States."
 SEMINAR:
- 11/7 ***Class Discussion***
 READ: Marguerite Kraft, *Frontline Women*:
 SEMINAR:
Due: Signed Reading Log of 250-500 pages beyond assigned reading.
- 11/14 ***Contemporary 21st century women's role in mission***
 GUEST SPEAKER: Kay Rader, The Salvation Army (Korea, England, USA)
 SEMINAR:
- 11/21 FALL READING WEEK
- 11/28 ***Issues and opportunities for non-Western women in mission***
 READ: Wendy Murray Zoba, "Women reaching women is key to the future of missions"
 GUEST SPEAKER: Marcia Florkey, United Methodist Church (GBGM)
 SEMINAR:
- 12/5 ***Emerging questions and new perspectives on gender and mission***
Due: Research Papers (15-20 pp) in Support of Seminar Presentation
- 12/12 ***Closing class***
 Class may meet on this date.

Required Readings:

- Houghton, Frank L.
 1953 *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur*. Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade.
- Robert, Dana L.
 1997 *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice*.
 Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- 2002 *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century*.
 Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

- Stocks, Janet
1997 "Voices from the Margins: Evangelical Feminist Negotiation in the Public Debate of a Small Denomination in the United States" IN *Mixed Blessings: Gender and Religious Fundamentalism Cross Culturally*, Judy Brink and Joan Mencher, eds. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 59-71.
- Storkey, Elaine
2001 *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Zoba, Wendy Murray
2000 "Women reaching women is key to the future of missions." *Christianity Today*, August 7:40-48

Additional (Suggested) Readings:

- Barton, R.R.
1998 *Equal to the Task: Men & Women in Partnership*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Beaver, R. Pierce
1960 *American Protestant Women in World Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Belenky, Mary F., Blythe M. Clinchy, Nancy R. Goldberger, and Jill M. Tarule
1986 *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bilezikian,
Beyond Sex Roles. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Drummond, Lewis A. and Betty Drummond
1997 *Women of Awakenings: The Historic Contribution of Women to Revival Movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.
- Grenz, Stanley and Denise M. Kjesbo
1995 *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Tucker, Ruth A. and Walter L. Liefeld
1987 *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan